

MAY 9 1938

A

VINDICATION

Of the Commands and Doctrine of

Christ Jesus,

And of his People in their faithful Obedience to him, against all *Swearers* and *swearing*, whatsoever according to the Scriptures of

TRUTH.

With a few words unto all such Rulers Teachers and People, of what degree or sort soever, that have a hand in Afflicting, Persecuting, and casting such into Prisons who for Conscience-sake dare not break the Commands of Christ, nor go out of his *DOCTRINE*.

And it is one Visitation and Warning more from the Lord unto them, before he sweep the Land of Evil Doers with the Beesome of their final destruction.

And this is in love to their Souls, by a Lover of Righteousness and Truth, and a witness against all Unrighteousness, Injustice, and Oppression.

W. B.

For the Land is full of Adulterers, for because of swearing the land mourneth, &c. For both Prophet and Priest are prophane. Wherefore their way shall be unto them, as slippery waies in darkness. They shall be driven on and fall therein, for I will bring evil upon them even the year of their visitation saith the Lord, Jer. 23.

NOW seeing the great controversie at this day between the false Christians and the true, (namely the persecuting Powers of this Generation, and the Royal Seed and people of God called Quakers,) is about Swearing, and Oathes, and the like matters appertaining to Religion, and Worship of God, which are matters of Conscience, (the answer of which before God in the day of death, is a mans eternal condemnation; or Justification and salvation.) It therefore lies upon me at this time, to vindicate the only right and propriety of Christ Jesus, in the Consciences of his people; and also of his people in their faithfulness and obedience unto him; (who is the head of his Church, and whose right alone it is to reign,) against that doctrine and soul destroying principle, of imposing Oathes, or any other thing whatsoever, which concerns the exercise of the soul and conscience, (which is immortal) towards God, or any part of his worship, &c.

1. It is written in the second Epistle of *Iohn*, at the nine ten and eleven verses, on this wise, viz. *Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God: He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son, and if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.*

2. Now if any to whom this may come, should be ignorant of what this meaneth, or what this doctrine of Christ is, or what the word doctrine do signifie, let them take notice of what followeth.

As for the word doctrine, it signifies teaching, or that which is taught, so that the doctrine of Christ is that which he taught or doth teach; and it may be truly read thus, *Whosoever abideth not in the teaching of Christ, or in what he taught, or teacheth, hath not God, &c.* now mark, such an one that abideth not in that which Christ taught hath not God, but he that doth abide in what Christ hath taught and teacheth, hath both the Father and the Son.

3. Now the controversie being very great at this day between two sorts of people in this Nation of *England*, about religious matters, for which the one do persecute abuse, imprison, rob, spoile,

spoil, & greatly oppress & afflict the other, (namely for conscience sake, for abiding in the doctrine, & obeying the commands of Christ) Let us therefore mark and try the difference of these people according to the Scriptures of truth, which those persecutors themselves profess is their rule; so by their own rule let them be tryed.

4. Now the people who are thus persecuted and abused, &c. are such as abide in the doctrine of Christ, in that which he taught, and teacheth, (for which they are persecuted) and hath both the Father and the Son, 2 *Iohn* 9. And their persecutors and oppressors are such as break the commands, and abide not in the doctrine of Christ, and so hath not God, (as will be proved and made manifest) neither are they to be bid God speed, for such as bid them God speed (or side with them) are partakers of their evil deeds; so they that hath not God, (but are without God) are the persecutors and afflictors of them, that hath both the Father and the Son, (let all people take notice of this,) and now is the Scripture fulfilled, [*These things will they do unto you for my names sake, because they know not him that sent me, John 15: 21.*] &c.

5. Now what the doctrine of Christ is, or what he hath taught, or doth teach his Friends, and Disciples to do, and to leave undone, may be mentioned in many particulars, but at present I may omit, but what is in my aim, as to the thing in hand, which is about Swearing and Oathes.

6. And now that Christ Jesus did forbid his Disciples to swear, and that it was his doctrine which he taught them not to swear at all, may be easily proved, yea though they were such oathes and swearing as were lawful, and commanded in Old time, and to be performed to the Lord, as may be read in the record of *Matth.* 5, Ch. 33, 34. &c. *Again ye have heard that it hath been said by them in Old time, Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oathes: But I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is Gods Throne, nor by the earth, for it is his Footstool, neither by Jerusalem for it is the City of the great King, neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black; But let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more then these cometh of evil.*

And said *James* a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to his Brethren, (who wrote to the Twelve Tribes scattered abroad) *Above all things my brethren swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the earth neither by any other oath, but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay, least ye fall into condemnation, Ch. 5. 12. v.* bringing with him the very same doctrine which Christ taught them, in which whosoever abideth not, hath not God, let him profess what he will; for saith *John* in his first Epistle. *We are of God, he that knoweth God beareth us, he that is not of God, beareth not us, hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error,* cleatly manifesting that such as bring not the same doctrine with them are in the spirit of error, and that abide not therein are not of God, but of the world, *1 John 4. 5, 6. And the whole world lyeth in wickedness, Ch. 5. 19.* So he that saith I know him (or profess him) and keepeth not his Commandements, is a lyer, and out of the truth, and so a deceiver and an Antichrist, *dying both the Father and the Son, Ch. 2. 22, 23.* For whosoever denieth Christ's words and doctrine, hath denied him also, and he that denieth him, denieth the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also, *(not onely with the lips)* for the Father hath committed all power and judgement to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; (who said) *This is my beloved Son here ye him, Mat. 17. 5.* But they that break his Commandes, and abide not in his doctrine, do dishonour him, and are contrary to him, of Antichrist, without God, in the world, &c.

7. *Object.* Now some may object and say, that these Commands or Doctrines of Christ Jesus, and his servant *James*, about oathes and swearing, was not to disanul, make void, or prohibit all swearing and oathes, as Religious oathes, (as some call them) or oathes of Allegiance, or obedience to Superiors, before a Magistrate, lawfully tendred, or the like; but vain and frivolous oathes and swearing in their common talk, or such superstitious and Idolatrous swearing and oathes as the Pharisees used, who said, it was nothing to swear by the Temple, but whosoever shall swear by the Gold of the Temple, he is a debter, &c. Against whom Christ denounced many woes, and called them Fooles and blind, *Matt. 23.*

8. *Answer.*

8. *Ans.* Now first consider to whom Christ and his Servant James did speak, and read their words, and weigh them in the fear of God, *Matt. 5. 6. ch.* And thou maist see that Christ spake to his own Disciples, expounding the things concerning the law, wherein was written, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery, Thou shalt not kill*; &c. *Exod. 20. And an eye for an eye, and a Tooth for a tooth*; &c. *21. 14. And whosoever shall put away his Wife, let him give her a writing of Divorcement Deut. 24. 1, &c.* Calling the time of the Law, the Old time, in which these things were given forth as Commandements by the Lord, as also swearing in that time was commanded and lawful, and the oathes to be performed to the Lord, as may be read *Numb. 30. 2. If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth*; &c. And in *Deut. 6. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him, and shalt swear by his name*; And *Psal. 63. Every one that sweareth by him shall glory, but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopp'd*, and the Angel swore, and Abraham and Isaac swore; and in *Isaiah 65. 16. And he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of Truth (but the mouth of the Liar shall be stopp'd)* and Joseph and David swore, and many more that might be mentioned; So that swearing by the God of Truth in the earth was lawful in the Old time, of which Christ spake as is sufficiently proved, *Gen. 21. 24. and 26. 31. and 42. 15.* But these things were but for their time and season, for the Law served (and the Old time swearing and ceremonies) till the Seed came, *Gal. 3.* which is Christ, the new and living way, who saith, *swear not at all*, *Matt. 5. 34.* So these were no such frivolous Oathes, neither was it onely such prophane or superstitious swearing, of which Christ was here speaking and forbidding his Disciples; or such oathes as the Pharisees used among them; But such as were to be performed (in the Old time) to the Lord, even in the time of the Law and the Prophets, of whom Christ the Substance is the end, to every one that beleiveth, who saith, *Swear not at all.*

9. And again, do ye conceit or beleive, that the Disciples of Jesus Christ (whom he sometimes called Brethren, and children) were such common or prophane swearers, or did swear
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their common talke as you false Christians do, who profess him & his doctrine & practise only in words & shew ; or do ye think or imagine it was onely the Pharisees blind Superstitious swearing, or the like that he forbade them ? If so, Then why did he mention the Old time, and those other things of the Law, and say, *Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of Old time, Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shall perform unto the Lord thine Oathes, &c.* this could not be the Pharisees oathes, and swearing then present ; neither any such prophane or superstitious oathes, because it were such oathes as were to be performed to the Lord, and not at that present time of the Pharisees, but in the Old time, of which they had heard, *Matt. 5.* or can thou say that ever the Pharisees, *blind swearing or foolish confused Oathes*, *Mar. 23.* was ever commanded by the Lord, or to be performed to him ? which I judge no man can prove.

10. But however, or what oathes or swearing soever it was, of which there and then he was speaking, and forbidding his Disciples, it was sufficient for them then, and for the Disciples of Christ (the true Christians) now, that he hath positively commanded (which is not to be disputed by them that follow him) saying, *But I say unto you, swear not at all*, seeing all power in heaven and earth, and all judgement and authority is given and committed to him, of whom God hath said, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*

And again, *Hebrew. 1. 1.* *God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers in the Prophets, hath in these last daies spoken unto us in his Son whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, &c.* Now if *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David and Solomon, Moses, Isaiah*, or *Ioseph* did swear, these were all but servants in the old time, but the Son who is the heir of all things, by whom the worlds were made, who is above the servants, by whom God speaks in these last daies, the new and living way, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth, whom all are to hear, saith, *Swear not at all*, and though the Angel swore, yet he is but a servant, as he himself said to *John*, [*See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant*] *Rév. 21. 9.* But Christ the Son is the Heir of all things, and hath obtained a more excellent name then the Angels,

gels by Inheritance, *Heb. 1. 4.* And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, *And let all the Angels of God worship him. vers. 5. 6. &c.*

12. And said Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, *If an Angel from Heaven should preach another Gospel, (or doctrine) unto you, then that which we have preached, let him be accursed;* so that we are not to look at any that swore in old time, or in daies past for our example and rule, (though it be an Angel from Heaven) contrary to Christs doctrine and command, who saith, *Swear not at all.*

13. For the Scripture *2 John 9.* do not say, *Whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of Angels, or of Isaiah. David or Solomon, &c. hath not God,* But *whosoever abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God,* and he that doth abide in it, hath both the Father and the Son, for he that obeyeth the Son, obeyeth the Father also; for the Father hath committed all things unto the Son, whom he hath given for a Leader and Commander to the people, and to be his salvation to the ends of the earth, and there is no other name given under heaven whereby men shall be saved, (Neither of Men or Angels) for he was before Abraham was, and is greater then Solomon, and Davids Lord, and higher then the Angels, who commands, *Not to swear at all, Mat. 5.*

14. Object. Now if any should yet Object and say, *Did not God himself swear by himself, Heb. 6. 13.* And the Apostle Paul say, *An Oath for confirmation among men was the end of strife, &c. Do not this allow of swearing and make room for oaths now among men in these dayes, &c.*

15. Answer. That which God did in daies past concerning swearing, mentioned *Heb. chap. 6.* It was to confirme his promise made to Abraham and to his Seed, (and they that are Christs are Abrahams seed, and heirs according to promise, and such are Christs, that abide in his doctrine, and do his commands, they only are his friends) and by way of similitude did the Apostle Paul there speak of it (to not by command or doctrine, he that reads, let him understand) *That men by an oath did end the controversie or strife among them, and confirme the thing about which they swore, who did swear by the Greater, as I have before mentioned, by them in the old time, Num. 30. 2. Deu. 6. 13, &c.*

So

So that the Apostle said, *Because God could not find a Greater, he did swear by himself, to Abraham, saying, surely in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee, &c.* This was a promise made to *Abraham* with an oath, putting him out of all doubt that he would fulfil it, and so he staggered not at it, but patiently waited till it came to pass. *Hebrews 6. 15.*

16 So that this is onely a Parable, shewing, that if among [men] an oath did confirme a thing, and end the strife, and that [men] did perform [their] oathes (who did swear by the *Greater*, which was once commanded by *Him*) how much more would the [Lord] be faithful to perform [His] oath which he sware by [Himself] (who is the *Greatest*) to *Abraham* and to his seed, seeing he cannot lye, nor is he a man that he should repent, but is the Righteous Judge of all the earth (that doth right) *Gen. 18. 25.*

17. So that this is neither precept, example or command for the Christians, the Disciples of Christ (now in these last daies) for swearing and oathes, but a repetition of what was done in times past, (the old time) to the Fathers as he speaks, *Heb. 1. 1. Which was in divers manners and at sundry times*, but now he hath spoken unto us in his Son and Heir, who is before *Abraham* and the end of the old time, the Law and the Prophets, who saith, *Swear not at all.*

18. *Object.* But did not God swear by himself, and will not Repent, *ch. 7. 21.* But this seems as if God did repent; seeing now by his son (to whom he hath given all power in heaven and earth) he commands not to swear at all in these last daies, is not this repenting of what was done formerly in the old time? &c.

Ans. No: It cannot be said (truly) here, he did Repent, seeing he hath willingly and faithfully performed and fulfilled that which he had then sworn and promised; as in the Record of *Luke 1. 72. 73.* where it is mentioned, not for a precept of swearing, but in thanksgiving and praises to the Lord, that he had performed the oath which he had sworn to *Abraham*, by giving them light (who were in darkness and in the shadow of death) and the knowledge of salvation, *by the remission of their sins, &c.*

But where he spake of swearing, and will not repent, it was con-

concerning the disanulling of all those Priests which were made by a carnal commandment, and of establishing Christ Jesus, His Son with an oath, to be a Priest for evermore, after the order of *Melchisedeck*, (an unchangeable unalterable order) and not after the order of *Aaron*, (which Priesthood was changed, and so there was of necessity a change also of the Law, by which swearing and oathes was commanded and tollerated) for such an High-Priest (saith the Scripture) became us, who is holy harmelefs, undefiled, sepearate from sinners, and made higher then the Heavens, &c. For the Law maketh men High-Priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son who is consecrated for evermore; mark the word of the oath (which was since the Law) which God sware and will not repent, maketh the Son an High-Priest for evermore, at whose mouth the Law must now be sought, as it was of the Priests in the Old time, *whose lips were to preserve the peoples knowledge*, Mal. 2. 7. But now in the Son Christ, dwelleth all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, by whom God speaks in these last daies, saying, *This is my beloved son hear ye him, &c.*

21. So that you who contend and plead for swearing, and oathes, and persecute about it, are yet in the old time and under the Law, and the old, disanulled, changeable Priesthood, and fell into condemnation, *James* 5. 12. and not under grace, no Disciples of Christ Jesus, the everlasting unchangeable High-priest, who saith, *Swear not at all*; And so no christians.

22. And so now, ye have no covering but what is too narrow for your swearing and oathes, nor no shadow of death or dark place to hide your selves under, from the light of the Son, who is now risen, and coming up to the noon day, whom God hath highly exalted, and given him a Name above every Name, that at his Name every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in the earth, and things under the earth, &c. *Phil.* 2. 9. 10.

23. And so if every knee must bow to him, then must *Abraham David* and *Solomon, Ioseph, Isaac* and *Jacob*, and all the Angels bow their knees, (understand what name, and what knees, of things in Heaven and Earth &c.) and all who did swear in the Old

Old time) to him who now saith, *Swear not at all*, Mat. 5. which is since the law.

24. And if ye shall yet again say or do beleive that it was on-ly prophane swearing and oathes that Christ there forbad his Disciples, even such as drunkards and quarrellers use in their common talke or such as the Pharisees used, as aforesaid, and not lawful or religious oathes.

25. To this I answer; If such prophane oathes and swearing and such superstitious and Idolatrous swearing, as the Pharisees and Hipocrites then used *Mat. 23.* were ever commanded of God, and to be performed to him in the Old time, then it were such oathes and swearing: But I do not read nor beleive, (nor any other true Christian) that God did ever in any age, or to any people whatsoever, command or allow of such a kind of swearing and oathes, as the ungodly, drunkards and prophane people use in their common talk, or such as the Hipocrites did then, or do now use, who persecute them that witness the oath and everlasting covenant of God fulfilled, which now saith to his Disciples, *Swear not at all.*

26. But if it could be so proved and made manifest, yet the word or commandement [*I say unto you swear not at all,*] do include (to the understanding of the upright and reasonable) all swearing whatsoever to be forbidden by Christ Jesus, whom all are to hear, and to whom every knee must bow.

27. *Object.* But here may yet another question arise, in the unfariable reasoning part, among people in the World, Viz. *If all swearing and oathes is now forbidden and that we must not swear at all by the command of Christ Iesus, what then will become of all the world? One man might kill another, and steal from another, and abuse, rob and spoil their neighbours without restraint or punishment, seeing mens words will not be taken, as sufficient to prove any crime against any according to Law, without an oath, which among men doth end the strife, and is a confirmation &c.*

28. To which I answer. I grant the whole world lyeth in wickedness, (as the Apostle *John* said) and they themselves confess the same, that they break the commands of God every day, in thought word and deed, which is also very apparent to all whose eyes are open, and many times complain theré is no health

health (or truth) in them, and that they are miserable finders. This is generally confest throughout *Europe*, and it may be throughout the whole world among the swearers, who are still in strife and debate, and smiteing with the fist of wickedness, notwithstanding all their oathes and swearing, it ends not the strife among them.

29. But now mark, these are all of the world, and their teachers who plead for swearing, and oaths, are of the world, and the world heareth them, 1 *John* 5. 19. These are miserable sinners without truth and health, no soundness from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, (from the high and mighty to the beggar on the dunghill) but all gone out of the way, erred and strayed from the right way, as they themselves confess.

30. Now when these do steal one from another, or kill, murder, or rob one another, we do not bid them refrain from swearing one against another, in that case, because they are no christians, *And what have we to do with them that are without* (as Paul said) *for such God judgeth*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 12, 13. but we direct and inform peoples minds, and exhort them that are thus in strife and swearing, killing and stealing, (*for which the Land mourneth* *Hof.* 4. 2. 3.) to come to the Light of Christ Jesus in their consciences, and learn of him (who sheweth them that these things are evil. and reproves the wole world for their sins) that so they might be taught (as his Disciples are) to deny all such ungodliness and these worldly Lusts, (from whence the strife and swearing, wars and fightings comes) and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world, and to do unto all men as they would have others do to them, and yet this is but the Law and the Prophets.

31. Therefore ye should consider, that this strife, swearing and oathes is not among christians, who obeys Christs commands, and abide in his doctrine, but in the world which lyeth in wickedness; And as saith the Prophet, *The wicked will do wickedly (while many are tryed, purified and made white) and none of the wicked shall understand*, *Dan.* 12. *And such as abide not in the doctrine of Christ, but transgresseth, hath not God*, 2. *John* 9.

32. So that all these things are among them that are out of the doctrine of Christ, who saith, *Swear not at all*, and so are with-

out God in the world, having their hearts blinded, and their hearts alienated and estranged from the covenant of promise, (which God sware to *Abraham*) and strangers to the Commonwealth of *Israel*, so are none of his Disciples, whom he hath taught to be merciful, and to do to all men as they would be done unto; and when this is done among people, where would be the killing, or stealing, imprisoning, or persecuting, if ye were but come to this; for thou would not have another kill thee, nor steal from thee, nor persecute thee for thy Religion and conscience; then take heed that thou do likewise, else thou art no christian, let thy profession be what it will, or thy Religion and worship, and outside Garments, of what colour or form soever. So that we do justly conclude, and Gods witness in all your consciences, shall one day witness the same; That we who are out of the swearing and strife abiding in Christs doctrine and commands, are of God, *and ha'th both the Father and the Son*, as it is written *2 John 9.* (how blindly soever you now judge of us) and that you who are in the strife and swearing out of the doctrine of Christ hath not God, but are without God, in the world that lyeth in wickedness, and have not his fear before your eyes, *which is to depart from evil*, *Prov. 8, 13. and 16. 6.*

Therefore consider these things, all ye Rulers, Teachers and people, who contend for swearing, and oathes, and cast the servants of God into your noysome holes, and prison-houses, making long furrows upon their backs with your Instruments of cruelty, for abiding in the doctrine of Christ Jesus; and because they cannot break his commands by swearing, and yet you your selves profess his name in words, and say you are christians, and that he is your Lord and Saviour and the like: Away with this hypocrisy, Gods soul loaths it, and ye are a burthen to him which he is even weary to bear, and he will shortly ease himself of all you hypocrites who cry Lord, Lord, and do not the things which he commands, this was the Pharisees state, the persecutors to whom the *woes* from the Son of God were denounced, as they are against you at this day.

Therefore if ye will now own swearing and oathes to be lawful, useful, and tollerable and plead for them, and persecute about them, and such things, when Christ Jesus hath expressly and po-

positively forbidden all swearing, (to whom God hath committed all power and judgement in Heaven and earth, to whom every knee must bow, who is made an High Priest with an oath (which God sware and will not Repent) since the Law and the Old time, who is the end of the Law and the Prophets, by whom God speaks in these last daies, &c.

Then confess openly before all people that ye are Jews. living in the Old time, under the Law, and not in the new and living way Christ the end of the Law; or that ye are Infidels, or Heathens, & no longer profes your selves christians for shame; or take the name of Christ into your mouthes for a cloak of malitiousness but as flatly deny him to be come in the flesh *with your mouth & tongues as ye do with your works, Tit. 1. 16.* And that such or any other of his commands, are of no effect or force to you, & so deny him to be Lord, who is the Head over all, to his Church, to whom every tongue shall confess, to the glory of God the Father.

For if ye do still profess him or his Name in words, and that ye are his servants, and call your selves christians or the like, and yet not obey his commands, nor do the things which he hath said, nor abide in his doctrine, but persecute them that do, we must and shall judge you in righteous judgement, to be abominable hypocrites, and rebellious, and disobedient both to the Father and the Son, for God hath said, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him;* and the Son said, *Swear not at all;* and John said, *Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God.* And this is Christs doctrine before mentioned, which he taught, *In which who so abideth hath both the Father and the Son.*

Therefore take heed to your selves what ye do, or what ye intend to do against such, for the Lord God of Heaven is pleading their cause, and will plead with you all who break his commands, and teach men so, or compel men so to do; for ye are all out of the doctrine of Christ, in the transgression (though ye can talk of him, and profess him with your mouth and lips) and hath not God, but are without God, in the world which lies in wickedness, where ye are contending and pleading for swearing and oathes in the old time, which ends not your strife, which the one oath, the new & living way ends, who saith, *Swear not at all, Mai. 5.*

So ye being without God in the world, breaking his commands, ye are not under Christs government; and so being out of his government ye are without his protection, for he praies not for the world, but for them whom he hath chosen out of it; for the whole world lies in wickedness: So ye being in the wickedness, in the Transgression, out of Christs protection, (who hath all power in Heaven and earth) ye are in darkness, and under the shadow of death, and in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, captivated in the snares and chains of the Old fool, (at his pleasure) whom ye obey, and so ye are in such a pre-munire (body, soul and spirit) that ye will never more get out except ye repent with speed, and turn your minds to the light of Christ Jesus in your consciences, and obey his commands, and abide in his doctrine, who saith, *Swear not at all.*

And this is the word of the Lord God of Heaven unto all you Rulers, Priests and people whatsoever, who swear and plead for swearing and oathes, and persecute the harmlesse about it, ye are none of Christs sheepe, servants, friends or children, but of the linage of Cain and the old hipocrites in their way, to whom the woe belongs, who denied Christ and chused a murderer, and so ye are no christians.

But Christ Jesus is come, and is setting up his government, Kingdome and dominion over all your kingdomes, and establishing his Throne upon top of all your Thrones, whose Scepter is a Scepter of righteousness, which must rule over all unrighteous Scepters. And to his name which is above every name, shall all your knees bow.

If ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and thy self, ye do well, &c.
For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all, I am. 2. 8. &c.

A few words more to the Rulers, Priests, Teachers and People, of what sort soever, in this Nation of England, from the highest to the lowest, who have any hand in persecuting the Innocent, &c.

Hear and underst and all ye Rulers, Priests and Teachers of England, with all your Officers and servants, or whomsoever else, Superior or Inferior, from the Iudge to the Goaler, or from the highest to the lowest, who have any hand, or are in any measure partakers against the innocent people and servants of the Lord Iesus Christ who cannot break his commands by swearing.

This we would give you to underst and, that as for us who fear and obey the Lord; your Prisons and cruel unjust dealings, and your long furrowes ye plough upon our backs therein, is very little to us, except to the more raising and strengthening of that life in us, which will never bow to your wills, or any will of man by transgressing the commands of Christ Iesus; for our eyes are not at what ye can or will, or have power permitted you to do, or at the length of time, in which we suffer bonds under your ambitious wills, or at any other temporal thing what soever; but to the Lord our God alone, who is pleading and will plead our innocent cause for us in all your consciences: Te if ye should shut us up in Dungeons never so close from you, out of your sight or hearing, yet Gods witness (as a drawn sword in your bowels) which seeth in secret, shall pierce through your heart and life, and smite you in your very vital parts for all your wickedness against him, his way of truth and harmeles people; and set in order before you, all your ungodly deeds and blasphemous hard speeches which ye have committed and spoken, for the eye of the pure God beholds, and his ear of jealousy hears you in your most secret chambers, from whose presence ye cannot alwaies fly nor hide your counsels, though you should dig as deep as Hell, or fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. And though you should keep us till death in your prisons, we cannot break the commands of our Lord and Saviour, which hath saved us, and will yet save and deliver us: But as for you who profess your selves christians, consider these things. Whether he whom you practise in words will not call you to an account for breaking his commands, and for casting his servants and children into prisons, and keep them there, for no other cause but for keeping the commands & abide

abiding in the doctrine of Christ, whom your selves profess in words and shew, as the Phariſees did, Moses and the Prophets, but opposed their life, & Crucified Christ Jesus the end and substance of Moses and the Prophets words; Ye hypocrites, what covering or excuse can ye have to hide or shelter your selves under, in the day of the Lord which happens upon you?

It is not your Acts and decrees made in the will of man that shall stand you in stead, or save you, when the sentence is given against you, Go ye workers of Iniquity, into everlasting torment: Nay, they shall not be able to save themselves from the just judgement of our God, but shall receive a just recompence for all their doings.

And as for us we choose rather to die then transgress against the Lord Jesus Christ, or wrong our conscience in any measure by bowing to the corrupt wills of proud & ambitious men, who are alienated from God, and would alienate us from him also; Did we obey your require-ments, or impositions in these unjust & unrighteous things? but we desire to live alway in obedience and humility before him, though our outward man perish through your unjust and cruel dealings; our souls you cannot touch to defile them, neither can ye break our peace with our God by all ye can do.

For we know the utmost of your power and Ability, the last enemy is death, and through the tender mercies of our God we do enjoy that life and peace, in which we daily triumph over, death and Hell, and the gates of it; Praises, and thanks to his holy Name for ever and ever, being founded on the unmoveable Rock of our salvation Christ Jesus in whose will, life and strength, we are resolved in patience for his truth and Namesake, to undergoe the greatest punishments, afflictions, or death, that you from the highest to the lowest, can or shall be able, or suffered to inflict upon us. So we have fully weighed and considered the cost to the utmost.

But as for you this I tell you all, from the highest to the lowest, who have the least hand in our sufferings (either in particular or in general) who (in scorn) are called Quakers, you are splitting and dashing, breaking and scattering, confounding and destroying your own selves in these things, and if no other hand be lifted up against you, by this shall ye fall. And this is Gods word of truth unto you which shall stand and be fulfilled. So his blessed will be done, and in it we are well satisfied, knowing and believing that the Lord whom we serve and obey, knoweth how to deliver them that trust only in him, and to reserve it ungodly, to the day of judgement to be punished.

From my Prison at
Harford the 10th,
month 1663.

where I remain a close prisoner be-
cause I cannot swear and break the
command of Christ Jesus.

Thus saith the Lord, I will make Jerusalem a burthenstone to all people, and they that burthen themselves with her shall be dashed in pieces.

The END.

Printed for W. M.

